

FALL 2008

# Accent

AN AVILA UNIVERSITY  
PUBLICATION

## Santa Fe Trail

*Avila stands as a  
landmark along the  
historic trail of hopes*

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Transformation*

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# Day-to-Day Opportunities



*We all know that the action of one person can make a difference. When all within a community put into practice these simple actions, every day, think how that adds up. We all make a difference.*

– Susan Lawlor

**Susan Lawlor**  
is an associate professor  
and chair of Art + Design.

I am pleased to find myself, after 16 years, still a part of the Avila University community – it's a rich and rewarding relationship. Avila is an accepting, welcoming place, where I find us united by our shared values.

What's special about this place is that it lets each of us find the source of our values, our motivation, in different ways. We have diverse backgrounds, disciplines, and beliefs, but I believe that what unites is not where we grew up, or how we express our faith, but a simple goal – to do the right thing. One of my colleagues, a Sister of St. Joseph, once told me that what matters is how we live our lives day to day. That summarizes faith to me: how we live, what actions we take, what we consider important, what means we use to reach what end, and what goals we work toward, day to day.

Day to day. If you think about each day as an opportunity to make a difference – not just hoping that when you look back at the end of your life that something was achieved, but simple actions, ongoing, every day – that to me is faith.

Life is a gift. Waking up every day is a gift. Family. Friends. The job we do. And where we live.

I am a gardener. I tend a postage stamp of a yard in the middle of the city, surrounded by miracles. I am continually amazed at the will expressed by the life in my garden. Plants appear in the crevices in concrete, stray wildlife wander through, creatures appear from nowhere and choose to stay. The very least I can do is not interfere. I do all I can to not intrude on the life that has a will of its own in my small garden in the heart of the city. Leave no trace.

That's a phrase I learned when I was a Girl Scout leader: Leave no trace. When you visit a friend's home, you leave it as you found it.

We have a challenge ahead of us. This planet, this gift we were given, is our home, and the home of all the creatures

that quietly venture near us. We must leave no trace. We must leave it as we found it.

Avila University is a Catholic institution sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph. All of us here are aware of our Community Values, Mission, and Purposes. Many of them apply in our consideration of this challenge:

*Prepare students for responsible lifelong contributions to the global community. The worth, dignity and potential of each human being. Diversity and its expression. Interaction with and service to others. Commitment to the continual growth of the whole person. Responsiveness to the needs of others. Examination of social justice issues. Collaboration.*

All of these ideas encourage us to do the right thing for this place that we inhabit and share. We need to put these inspirational phrases in action every day.

Avila University is proud to announce the formation of the Environmental Action Committee. In the year since its inception, we have begun to make changes that we believe will ultimately make a difference – reduce our consumption of resources, recycle, develop an ecologically sound landscape, and communicate to our community how and why to participate.

Simple actions add up. Isn't it surprising sometimes how much you can get done in a short focused time, how things add up, how progress is made? We all know that the action of one person can make a difference. When all within a community put into practice these simple actions, every day, think how that adds up. We all make a difference. This community of which we are all a part shares a simple goal: to do the right thing.

A wise person told me that her definition of faith is how we live our lives, day to day. We are part of the Avila community, but also part of the global community. We have to protect this gift that we were given, and that we share. This gift is where we live. 🌱

# Accent

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of Carondelet.*



## ON THE Cover

Avila sits on the historic Santa Fe Trail  
where travelers replenished their  
supplies before heading West.

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# Avila University receives continued accreditation

**T**he Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools announced that Avila University will be reaccredited for a 10-year period – the maximum number of years awarded.

“Avila University is in an exciting time,” the report reads. “It is establishing its brand as a school that offers a caring Catholic identity. The process is ongoing, but promises to stabilize enrollment and finances while at the same time assert who and what Avila will be. There is a welcoming and gracious spirit on campus and the feeling of renewal.”

The HLC announcement was the culmination of Avila University’s extensive institutional review addressing the commission’s requirements and criteria for reaccreditation. The steering committee, including S. Marie Joan Harris, Dr. Michele Hinds, Dr. Sue King, and Dr. David Wissman, completed a 144-page comprehensive self-study, which provided evidence to the HLC evaluation team about how Avila meets the designated criteria, identified areas of strengths for the University and outlined opportunities for improvement with action plans for moving forward.

“I want to express my deep appreciation to the steering committee of our reaccreditation effort for all of their hard work,” said Avila University President Dr. Ron Slepitz. “Their work was exemplary - their product outstanding.”

In January, an HLC evaluation team visited Avila to gather information for a formal report. Participants of the five-member team, led by Dr. David W. Wantz,

Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Indianapolis, reported their evaluations to the committee for final approval.

“Becoming part of the accreditation process with the HLC has two fundamental purposes: quality assurance and institutional and program improvement,” King said. “For Avila, being reaccredited for another 10 years provides an indication of our quality of education provided to students. It notes that Avila University has evidence that we do what we say and are true to our stated mission and values. It indicates that we have a recognized commitment to continual improvement of our programs and processes and to the criteria standards set by the HLC.”

The HLC is one of six accrediting agencies in the U.S. that provides institutional accreditation on a regional basis. Institutional accreditation evaluates an entire institution and accredits it as a whole. Other agencies provide accreditation for specific programs. Accreditation is voluntary, and the HLC accredits about 1,100 institutions of higher education in a 19-state region. The commission is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Avila University has been fully and continually accredited by the HLC since 1946. Its accreditation is at the master’s level in Education, Psychology, and the master’s degree in Business Administration. Avila University’s post-baccalaureate certificates are offered in areas of Master’s programming and in project management. 





# New Hodes Center makes campus life more convenient

Completed just in time for the students to step on campus, the new Hodes Center promises to provide Avila University students with multiple services.

This August, the Hodes Center renovation project wrapped up, creating a centralized office for student services. The lower level of Carondelet Hall was remodeled over summer break to provide easier accessibility, new opportunities in programming, and an updated look.

"The centralized location is working really well," said Assistant Director of Learning Services Julie Brogno. "Students stop in to use the computers and we're really promoting a study atmosphere. Now the students can get help if they need it and have the all these resources in one place."

During the first week of school, Brogno said that over 100 students stopped by the

Hodes Center, and she expects to have many more as the school year progresses.

"With the new Hodes Center, we have much more visibility and traffic," Brogno said. "Having the centralized location allows us to refer students to other services more easily. Now we can walk students over to another service instead of giving them directions across campus."

Student services available in the new Hodes Center include Career Services, Counseling Services, Disability Services, Health Services, International Student Services, Learning Services, and Upward Bound. 📖



Students make good use of the many centralized conveniences housed in the new Hodes Center.

## Avila international students team up with Cerner volunteers

**A**s the Kansas City Wizards faced off against the Los Angeles Galaxy, Avila University international students teamed up with Cerner Corporation mentors for a day of relaxation and fun.

The teams were warming up as international students, Avila University staff, and Cerner mentors arrived at Arrowhead Stadium. Cerner provided tickets, Wizard scarves, and sideline passes to the group. With the Galaxy's David Beckham just feet away, everyone was excited to be on the field.

"It was exciting to go onto the field and even better to win," said Eugene Peoples, international student services coordinator. "The international students were really

into the game and it was a fun day for everyone."

The partnership began when Cathy Mueller, Avila University board of trustee member and vice president of customer service at Cerner, teamed up with Peoples to create the Avila Cerner Friendship Program. Through the program, mentors from Cerner are paired with international students to help them acclimate to the Kansas City community and introduce them to American corporate culture.

Over the past year the mentors and students have held an ice-breaker dinner, gone to the American Royale, watched a Wizards game, and exchanged many e-mails. 📧





# Avila scholars travel to Morocco



Hasan and Hamilton engage in dialogue with other students.



Avila scholars Dotty Hamilton, Ph.D. and Farrukh Hasan enjoy the scenery of Medina.

This past summer, Avila scholars Dotty Hamilton, Ph.D. and Farrukh Hasan traveled to Morocco to take part in the prestigious Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar.

Hamilton and Hasan traveled to northwestern Africa for a five-week seminar on Unity and Diversity in an Islamic Society. While there, they studied the cultural identity of present-day Morocco, including the role Islam plays in shaping cultural, political and artistic communication. The trip included visits to urban cities, tourist meccas, rural villages, deserts, and even a Moroccan university.

"The trip was the most enriching experience," said Hasan, Avila's public services librarian. "I have traveled to many countries but this was unique because I traveled with fourteen people, counting the Moroccan professor. The people in Morocco were so wonderful, so generous and kind, for me the whole experience was very profound."

While in Morocco, Hamilton and Hasan had the opportunity to attend academic lectures, meet with professors from around the world, interact with students, and experience five-thousand-year old culture.

"This trip is a perfect example of the transforming opportunities of world travel," said Hamilton, Avila's dean of the school of visual and communication arts. "As Avila proceeds to implement the global initiative of our new strategic plan, preparing students to be responsible members of the global community, I hope to see more of these experiences for students, faculty and staff."

Hasan referred to Avila's core values, explaining that by traveling abroad one can experience Avila values as it creates a strong sense of diversity and its expression, as well as a strong urge to maintain the right relationship with earth and its inhabitants.

Hasan also noted that the opportunity to be immersed in another language was extremely valuable. Hasan, who speaks French, Urdu, Hindi, English, and some Arabic, appreciated the experience. She said that learning new languages can be life enriching and can add an entirely new perspective. Hamilton agreed, saying that she came home with a better understanding of multiple cultures.

"I had a greater appreciation of the diversity of the country by observing the different regions, cultures, and spoken languages in each area," Hamilton said. "I even got to practice my French and learned some Arabic - which came in handy when I had two Saudi Arabian students in my class this semester. They seemed pleasantly surprised when I answered their 'thank you' with 'afwan' (you're welcome). So the experience has already provided



me with an immediate way to reach out to my new international students."

Although Hamilton and Hasan did not apply for the seminar together, their friendship grew over the five-week trip.

"Farukh and I were roommates during the five-week trip and I consider that a great gift," Hamilton said. "I learned about her country and culture as well as the country we were in. She introduced me to afternoon tea, and my memories of Moroccan mint tea with Farukh are some of the best moments of my trip."

Throughout their stay, Hamilton and Hasan, along with fellow participants, also worked to develop curriculum on Morocco, with all educational models to be published on a Web site for other educators to use.

"The purpose of the trip is for the participants to take back what they have learned and share with both the academic community and the greater community," Hamilton said.

The Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar provides opportunities for educators and administrators to develop curriculum in fields related to humanities, languages, and area studies. Topics and host countries of the seminars vary from year to year. To see the locations and qualifications for the summer 2009 Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar, log on to [www.ed.gov/programs/iegpsap/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/programs/iegpsap/index.html). 📄



Hamilton and Hasan say good-bye to Moroccan professor Dr. Zekri at the farewell reception.

## Green effort continues to GROW

As students piled onto campus this fall, the trash on campus began to pile up too. Through the Avila Recycling Program, students are making a difference one step at a time.

The residence halls have been recycling paper, plastic, aluminum and cardboard for the past two years and the new paper retriever program began last semester. There are about 35 paper retriever boxes located in various locations across campus. Since the arrival of the boxes, Avila has recycled .961 tons of paper. This year, the recycling program set a goal of recycling 15 tons of paper and looks forward to more involvement than ever.

"This year we want to build off the paper retriever, and get the campus more involved," said Bailey Umstattd, Avila senior and Recycling Program co-founder. "We also want to get the surrounding community to use our recycling bins. We're trying to establish a bigger recycling team and we're also trying to get plastic recycling throughout the campus."

Along with the students' efforts, the campus is also making improvement to 'go green.' The new Thompson Residence Hall has fixed-range thermostats, only varying the temperature in an eight-degree range to save on energy use. The fixed-range thermostat is also installed in the Barefoot Room in Marian Center.

Other campus-energy savers include motion detector lights located in some residence hall bathrooms, laundry rooms, and kitchens, cutting down energy use in these commonly used areas. Avila also utilizes compact fluorescent light bulbs which use about 75 percent less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and last up to ten times longer.



"I believe we have a shared responsibility to preserve and possibly restore the earth for future generations," said Jen Lee, Avila senior and Recycling Program co-founder. "One of the biggest benefits of the program so far has been uniting students, staff, and faculty in an effort to make the campus more sustainable and eco-friendly." 📄

For more information on the Avila Recycling Program and the Environmental Action Committee, contact Susan Lawlor, chair, at 816-501-3762.



Jen Lee, program co-founder, hard at work in Avila's green effort.



## "On the road again..."

**A**vila alumni can be found in each of the 50 states and across the globe, and it's the goal of the Alumni Association to keep each of them connected with the university. "It's wonderful to hear about the tremendous impact our alums have had on their communities, and to listen to them tell of their achievements. We have impressive alumni," said Susan Randolph, director of alumni relations. "Staying in touch and keeping them informed about happenings and enhancements on campus, as well as connecting them to each other, is delightful."

Many of Avila's alumni have chosen to remain in the Midwest, so coming to campus for special events like the annual barbecue or to attend a theater production or sporting event is possible for them. They easily can meet students, see remodeled areas and new construction, and reconnect with other alumni. Distance makes it more difficult for those who live in other states to stay in touch and up-to-date. To help keep the Avila family informed, advancement staff have taken Avila on the road, recently visiting St. Louis, Washington, DC, Atlanta and Denver. These road trips give graduates a chance to meet other members of the Avila family who live in their area, renew friendships and enjoy a mini-reunion.

In April, Tom Zahner '83 and Joe Schrick '83 hosted a gathering of alumni and their families in St. Louis. The group met with advancement staff members Brian Moore and Jessie Fuller, and heard from President Ron Slepitzka about the new "look" to Avila's campus. In May, Dr. Cece (Gatson) Grindel '69 and Kathy (Lewellen) Phillips '62 welcomed Atlanta area alumni to a Sunday afternoon reception at the Doubletree Atlanta Buckhead hotel. Jessie Fuller, Susan Randolph and Ron Slepitzka were able to share information about campus improvements,



Mr. Ed and Mrs. Kathy Phillips '62, Drs. Mike and Cece Grindel '69, and President Ron Slepitzka

including the Jeanne Collins Thompson Residence Hall, and images of architect's renderings and initial construction on the Jeanne Hamilton Olofson Plaza. They also engaged the group in a discussion about the educational outcomes that continue to be the hallmark of an Avila degree.

Avila is truly on the road – literally with these visits and figuratively with campus and academic enhancements – and the advancement staff would love the chance to share the excitement with you and other alums in your area. Someone from Advancement may be calling you soon, and when they do, please say "yes" to a cup of coffee or lunch conversation. Better yet, call the Alumni office at 816-501-3780, and offer to host a gathering in your area! 📞



President Ron Slepitzka with Jeanne and Tom Olofson at the Olofson Plaza groundbreaking.

## Olofson Plaza in final stage

Construction is nearly completed on the Jeanne Hamilton Olofson Plaza project. You can track the progress of the project on the Web at [www.avila.edu/give/olofson](http://www.avila.edu/give/olofson). The dedication ceremony was held Nov. 11. Please check Web site for details. 📞





# New Thornhill Art Gallery coming soon to campus

**W**ith a growing reputation in the Kansas City arts community, Avila's Thornhill Gallery attracts large audiences to its shows of local and regional interest. Such attendance is welcome, but it does highlight the gallery's limited size and isolated location.

In the spring of 2009, Avila will open the new Thornhill Gallery and adjacent Sister Margaret Reinhart Courtyard in the Dallavis Center. Featuring moving display walls, ample storage and gallery lighting, the gallery will have one third more exhibition space, and the room to show much larger pieces of art. The courtyard will feature seating areas and a sculpture garden, serving as an extension of the gallery.

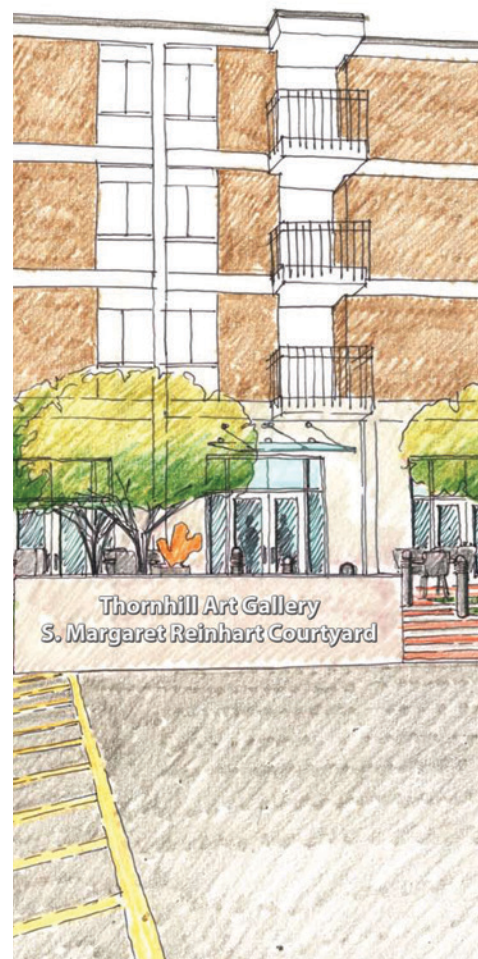
The new Thornhill Art Gallery will replace the current facility to create a modern exhibition and teaching space. The gallery project provides a great return for a modest investment by making use of existing space adjacent to the school of visual and communication arts. The new gallery will be an asset to the University and to the Kansas City community. As a versatile art space, it will continue to offer a strong, annual slate of shows available to school groups and individual visitors from the metropolitan area.

The existing Thornhill Art Gallery was named in honor of Mr. Edward A. Thornhill, a former Trustee, great friend to Avila and long time supporter. His wife, Mary Agnes, continues to be a gracious benefactor to the University. In memory of Mr. Thornhill, Mrs. Thornhill and family generously agreed to assist in the relocation and expansion of the gallery. Said son Tom, "My siblings and I were unanimous in our response to the University's invitation to perpetuate our father's commitment to Avila. He couldn't

say no to Sister Olive Louise."

S. Margaret Reinhart, beloved faculty member and chair of the art department, served Avila from 1945-1997, training two generations of students. Sister's family-niece Molle '55 and her husband Corky, great nephew Patrick and his wife Janna '90—have made a gift to the University which will create the S. Margaret Reinhart Courtyard. Featuring a sculpture garden as well as a seating/gathering space, the courtyard will honor Sister's faith and her dedication to the University. 🏡

An architectural rendering of the new Thornhill Art Gallery and S. Margaret Reinhart Courtyard



## Avila to honor Bill Waris

This fall, Avila unveiled a newly painted court in the Mabee Fieldhouse honoring the memory of Bill Waris, the first coach of the men's basketball program. Bill started the program from scratch in 1974 and coached until 1982 when he was elected to serve as the Jackson County Executive. During his tenure at Avila, Bill also served as principal at neighboring St. Thomas More School. He was known throughout the community as a very caring and giving person and those thoughts were echoed by the players that suited up on his Avila teams.

Bill passed away in September of 2007, but his friends, family and players rallied to raise funds to underwrite the court project and endow a permanent scholarship fund in his name that will benefit future basketball players at Avila. If you are interested in helping the scholarship fund grow, we encourage you to use the enclosed envelope and select "Waris Scholarship." 🏡







Avila University President Dr. Ron Slepitzka joined honorary chairpersons Mr. and Mrs. Bill Dunn, Sr.

## The 32nd Annual Avila University Steer Dinner

was held on March 8, 2008 at the Sheraton Overland Park Hotel. The honorary chairs for the event were Jean '44 and Bill Dunn, and in their honor this year's theme was "Changing Skylines." Terry '79 and Bob Fisher were the event chairs. Nearly 400 guests enjoyed a beef dinner, the silent and live auction courtesy of Ron Stricker and the Nigro brothers, and dancing to the Karen Davis Project. One of the event highlights was the new "heads and tails" live auction item which allowed guests to play a giant game of heads or tails for a diamond necklace donated by Balano Jewelry. The event was hosted by John Holt, and more than \$325,000 was raised for student scholarships.



Mr. Bob Fisher, event sponsorship chairman, was joined by his daughter, Maggie.

**The 33rd Annual Steer Dinner will be held on Saturday, March 7, 2009.**



Sr. Olive Louise Dallavis, Avila president emerita, greeted the honored guests.





Avila associate professor Dr. Ben Meade was the winning bidder for the exclusive EBT dinner with Sr. Olive.



Mr. and Mrs. Richard Teahan joined Mr. and Mrs. Joe Fahey, Avila trustee.



Mr. and Mrs. John (Jack) Kitchin are long-time supporters of Avila University.



Mr. and Mrs. Steve South enjoyed their first Steer Dinner and won the diamond necklace in the "Heads and Tails" auction.



Mr. and Mrs. Jack Newman, former Avila trustee, enjoyed the festivities.



Mr. and Mrs. David Frantze, Avila trustee, helped celebrate the "changing skylines."



Avila Board of Trustee Chairman Mr. James Gegg is joined by his wife, Stephanie.



Avila University President Dr. Ron Slepitzka welcomed the Steer guests.





# *T*eaching the philosophy of love

by Jeremy Lillig

## S. Ruth Stuckel is an icon at Avila University.

Her presence on campus, however, has changed. Stuckel made the decision to retire as full-time associate professor of philosophy, ending her career as Avila's senior-most faculty member.

### *Exemplary model*

Born into a loving family in St. Louis, Mo., Stuckel first encountered her call from God in elementary school. Her sixth grade class attended daily mass and when the school year came to an end, her teacher asked if she was going to keep coming over the summer. The simple question changed her life forever.

She later attended Xavier High School and played basketball in a semi-professional league where she was an All-American basketball player, having led her team to 43 consecutive victories. At the same time, Stuckel was realizing another victory, her calling to religious life.

### *Extraordinary teacher*

At age 18, Stuckel entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. She took her vows on March 19, 1957, beginning a career in education that would touch thousands. She taught elementary school and received her bachelor of arts in philosophy from Fontbonne University and a master of philosophy from the University of Kansas and Exeter University in England. In 1966, she began her appointment to the faculty of Avila College.

"Overall, S. Ruth, who was awarded Professor Emerita status and still teaches as an adjunct, is a remarkable faculty member who is a strong role model for her colleagues in the college of humanities and performing arts and for the university as a whole," said Charlene Gould, dean of the school of humanities and performing arts. "She is a generous, patient, and inspirational professor who has high standards and ethics."

The students in Stuckel's classes were often full of smiles and laughter due to her infectious joy. She believes that "the students at Avila are respected for who they are. They discover their potential, do their best, and are truly amazing."

Her students say that Stuckel genuinely enjoyed teaching and that they will miss seeing her smile.

"S. Ruth Stuckel has a very warm and inviting smile that reassures the troubled mind that all is well," said former student Dundego Warren. "S. Ruth was extremely positive, patient, and helpful with those who did not fully comprehend the material."



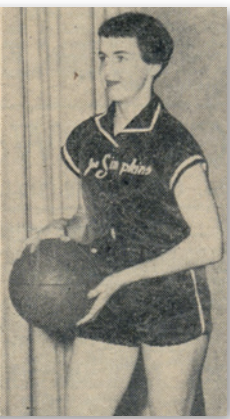
opening round, Ruth finished high scorer of the tourney with 65 points for three games the Simpkins won the consolation honors.

Ruth, a senior at Xavier High School on West Pine, made 34 points in one game for the high school of the meet. Other members of the first team, which may play in Paris, France, this July,

Betty Rocco of Chicago; Betty Wagner and Susan Kidd of champion South Bend Rock and Tom McKenzie of North Plain, N. J.

**SO IN SOFTBALL**

Eight sectional champions, including the Simpkins and Kutis of St. Louis played in the tournament. The plaque, signifying her as all-America selection, isn't the one to adorn the Stuckel home 308 Murdoch ave. In the past years that Miss Stuckel has played basketball and softball.



One of the many newspaper articles praising Stuckel's athletic prowess.

## Compassionate worker

Not only a professor, Stuckel is an advocate in her own right, having long supported the development of women's studies at Avila. Personally influenced by St. Teresa of Avila, the university's patron Saint, Stuckel reflected that, "St. Teresa would be extremely happy that we help to develop young women of integrity who are comfortable with who they are, aware of injustice, able to speak out and not be bitter. They have an instilled hope that they too can make a difference."

"One of S. Ruth's most outstanding accomplishments was her impressive research on 'St. Teresa of Avila: 16th Century Feminist,'" Gould said. "She presented at The Oxford Round Table at Oxford University in England in August 2005. She then shared her research and gave presentations to the college, Avila community, St. Teresa's Academy, Sisters of St. Joseph in the Kansas City area, and St. Thomas More parishioners."

## Intercessor

A sister for over 50 years, 71-year-old Stuckel continuously explores her faith, deepening her love for God. Her successful and accomplished career could be attributed to this continuous self-discovery and personal growth. Daily, regardless of weather conditions, Stuckel can be

seen walking around the Avila campus and surrounding neighborhood. While she enjoys the exercise, there is also a divine mission to her walks.

"I've memorized the names of all the faculty and staff of Avila and lift them up in prayer when I walk," Stuckel said.

She also prays for family, friends, the Sisters of St. Joseph, the students of Avila, and offers a special prayer for President Ron.



S. Ruth takes her vows in 1957.

## Revelation to the holy

In May 2006, Stuckel stood around the altar at the Holy Family Chapel in the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in St. Louis. While standing at the place where she first lived after entering the order, Stuckel decided to begin yet another contribution to the Avila community. She began sponsoring individuals who wished to become Associates to the Sisters of St. Joseph. She would go on to help sponsor and facilitate the formation process of 18 associates at Avila, with another group currently completing their faith journey, making it the largest group anywhere within the province.

"She did an exemplary job of serving as the CSJ Associate chair and guided a large class of Avila candidates from October 2006 to their successful completion in May 2007, when they all made their commitments," Gould said. "S. Ruth

always brings her charm and positive energy to meetings, and it is a pleasure to have her as leader or as a member of any committee on which she serves."

## Witness

Much like the title of her favorite film, Stuckel has been a witness of love and compassion at Avila for over 40 years.

"S. Ruth continues to be an inspiration to the college of humanities and performing arts and the faculty assembly," Gould said. "Her professional work as a philosopher always added a wise perspective and she is a delight and a joy to collaborate with."

"S. Ruth created an atmosphere which made everyone comfortable to express their opinions, share experiences and enjoy learning," Warren said. "Instructors like S. Ruth, who truly enjoy teaching and inspiring students to do their best, are what makes Avila University a great place to learn." 🙏

Jeremy Lillig '01 graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in theatre.



President Ron triggers one of S. Ruth's infectious laughs during her retirement party.



*Heritage*

many hopes





# live on


by Brian Moore



## *On the Avila campus,*

there is a gray picnic table, weathered by time, in the grove of trees that separates the library from the baseball field. It's a good spot to relax between classes or watch the Eagles play a couple of innings on warm spring days. It also offers a panoramic view of the Santa Fe Trail, where travelers began crossing 140 years before the Avila campus was built.





Ruts, known as wagon swales, are permanent reminders of the thousands who traveled the “highway to the West.”

Some of the Trail travelers who stopped or passed by here were seeking fortune, some a better life. There were merchants, traders, explorers, trappers, and gold seekers, people of good intention and scoundrels. Whatever they sought, the trail was more than a road. It was a path of hopes that provided this diverse collection of people with the opportunity to create life on their own terms.

Half a mile west of the Avila campus, nestled between a Presbyterian church and suburban backyards, lays the remnants of New Santa Fe – a little post village situated on the west line of Missouri. Visitors can make out swales from wagon traffic, and walk through a small cemetery, surrounded by a black wrought-iron fence, with the graves of Santa Fe’s families, like the Englemans and the Youngs. Sergeant

John Holden of the Confederate Army is buried there. Way in the back is the headstone of an anonymous horse thief.

Incorporated in 1851, the area had existed as an Indian village until the early 1830’s, when its ample water and grazing land made it an ideal stopping point for the first day headed west out of Independence. According to traveler William C. Johnson, New Santa Fe marked “the separation between civilized and uncivilized life. Beyond were the vast plains...little known to the white man—the home of the Indian—and of the buffalo.” By the mid-1860s, New Santa Fe had established itself as an important outpost, with nearly 700 residents prepared to help travelers on their way. The town had doctors, blacksmiths, merchants and outfitters; there was a hotel, a shoe shop, and a saloon that straddled the state line.

However, that “civilized” life was not always ideal. The state line also subjected New Santa Fe to the Border-Ruffian War from 1855-1860, and nearby Civil War battles, including a raid by William Quantrill’s guerillas. In the years following the Civil War, outlaws and other shady characters continued to trouble the people of New Santa Fe.

Some 15 miles to the north of New Santa Fe, Father Bernard Donnelly had built a church and a school in the 1850s near the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri rivers. Now known as Quality Hill in downtown



# Santa Fe Trail artifacts



Many Trail artifacts have been uncovered as treasured reminders of the Settlers' lives. Visit the Trailside Center's Web site at [www.trailsidecenter.org](http://www.trailsidecenter.org) to see more.



Kansas City, the area was then a wooded bluff overlooking the rivers below. Father Donnelly needed assistance to educate the Spanish, French, Irish, German, and American children who were arriving in the quickly-growing city.

Over in St. Louis, the Sisters of St. Joseph had begun educating children in the late 1830s, and it was there that Father found help. Mother Saint John Facemaz, superior of the congregation in St. Louis, sent Mother Francis Joseph Ivory and five companions to begin classes at St. Joseph Academy in September of 1866. The following year, the school was incorporated as St. Teresa's Academy. For the next quarter century, St. Teresa's was the only

Catholic school providing more than an elementary education for girls in Kansas City.

America's massive westward expansion eventually resulted in the railroad replacing wagons and the need for trails. By 1910, New Santa Fe was nothing more than a few scattered buildings, as the town's economy had become obsolete. To the north, though, St. Teresa's was prospering, providing opportunity to more and more of Kansas City's girls, and the school had outgrown its quarters in what was now downtown. Under the leadership of Mother Evelyn O'Neill, 20 acres called Windmoor was obtained near 56th and Main. In what would become the Country Club district, 15 sisters opened the new St. Teresa's Academy

in 1910. Six years later, the sisters organized the junior college, which would become Avila, so that young women in Kansas City could have a Catholic college education.

Avila's president emeritus, S. Olive Louise Dallavis, connects the story of the trail and the college with her usual enthusiasm followed by just the slightest hint of righteous indignation. The first graduate of St. Teresa College, Margaret O'Rielly, had bequeathed her estate to the college on the condition that it be used for capital improvements. That gift allowed then-president of the College, S. Mary Daniel Tammany, to oversee the 1960 purchase of nearly 50 acres at the northwest corner of Old Santa Fe Road and Wornall Road for the construction



# *we're built upon the path of hopes*



The original farmhouse located on Avila's campus, owned by John Mercer Wells.



Collection plate made with wood from the original barn on Avila's campus.



Entrance to the New Santa Fe cemetery located at 122nd and State Line.

of its new campus. According to Sister, Judge Henry Bundshu, after whom the Avila library is named, and an avid historian, "clapped his hands and cheered the fact that the Avila College campus bordered the Santa Fe Trail." The very nature of the trail—with livestock and wagons veering back and forth due to weather conditions—made setting the property lines a challenge, so neighbors, college officials, and engineers inched the boundaries back and forth until an agreement was made.

Twenty-five years later, S. Olive Louise gave an interview to the *Kansas City Star* in which she mentioned that the purchase price for the land on which Avila sits had been \$200,000. Soon after, she received a phone call from Sarah Jane Wells Dunlap Ingram, from whom the land had been purchased. Mrs. Wells informed Sr. Olive that the land had been sold for \$100,000. Together, they discovered that scoundrels were still troubling people associated with the Santa Fe Trail. The real estate agent who had handled the transaction had, indeed, charged the Sisters \$200,000 for the land, and had then told Mrs. Wells that the land had been sold for \$100,000. He even took a commission from the transaction. "Evidently," Sr. Olive Louise reports, "the Lord wanted this misdeed to come to light." And while she's fine with telling the tale, Sister stops short with some of the details,

including the name of the agent in question, noting dryly that "his name is on the deed."

Despite the swindle, that initial conversation sparked a friendship with Sister that would last until Mrs. Ingram's death, and it also revealed a great deal about Avila's connection to the Santa Fe Trail. The property owned by the Wells family originally featured a barn and a blacksmith shop at the corner of Santa Fe and Wornall. Out of the barn were sold supplies to trail users: molasses, wheat, corn, textiles, shoes, barrels, nails, and wood. The family home sat near the same grove of trees which now provide such a wonderful view of the path of the trail. A spring was also in the grove, which no doubt provided for the Wells family, thirsty travelers, and livestock. That spring eventually caused engineering problems during the construction of the library. "I almost fell down the well," S. Olive exclaimed. "It didn't have a cover!" The site of the future Avila campus was not just a spot to pass on the trail, but an important part of the activity centered just to the west at New Santa Fe.

It's fitting that the Sisters of St. Joseph settled on this place to continue providing educational opportunities for the community. The Sisters' pioneering American journey began just a short time after the Santa Fe Trail became an international highway, and their arrival in Kansas City coincided with the zenith of the trail's importance.



# *The Santa Fe Trail* **today**

Like the trail, the Sisters have created a means for people to create life on their own terms. Over the years, St. Teresa's evolved from junior college to college to university, welcomed people of all faiths, and admitted men. During that time, thousands of people have passed through the institution's doors, with most finding the trail they were seeking, and others continuing their journey of hope. 🏠

*Brian Moore is the executive director of development at Avila University.*

Information about New Santa Fe courtesy of The Historical Society of New Santa Fe.

This summer, a recreational trail was opened on the southern edge of the Avila campus, following the historical alignment of the Santa Fe Trail. The generous contributions of the National Park Service, the Historical Society of New Santa Fe, and the City of Kansas City, Missouri will allow trail users to walk, bike and jog along the path of travelers and adventurers who passed as many as 190 years ago. The trail features interpretive signs and markers, native plantings, and rest areas along a ten-foot wide asphalt trail. Avila's portion of the trail is part of the Kansas City metropolitan area's MetroGreen plan to connect trails and parks in a seven-county area.





## all in the *family*

Sometimes, if you look very carefully, you can see a slim thread that connects people together. Other times, the thread is so interwoven around a group of people so many times that it is not possible to separate one from the other. That's how it is with the women of Dorothy Nestor's family, Avila University, and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

When Dorothy (Sipp) Nestor '38 graduated from high school, she received a call from the Sisters. They told her about a program called the National Youth Administration which would cover her tuition for college. She began a family tradition by choosing to attend the College of St. Teresa, which would later become Avila University. As part of her work duties, she was assigned to the chemistry lab to mix chemicals for one to two hours a day. According to Dorothy, it is a wonder that St. Teresa's Academy buildings were not destroyed in an explosion brought on by her lack of chemical knowledge.

Dorothy's daughter, Nancy (Nestor) Hand '71, was the next generation to participate in the Avila tradition. A graduate of St. Teresa's Academy, Nancy chose to attend Avila because she felt comfortable with and had found good mentors among the Sisters, a tradition she believes continues today. Sometimes, however, Nancy found herself on the wrong side of the Sisters when she and her classmates were informed that playing bridge was not, in fact, studying.

Michaela Hand started out in her mother Nancy's footsteps by attending St. Teresa's Academy. While she was encouraged to apply to Avila, she chose to do her undergraduate work at Northwest Missouri State University. However, she couldn't escape the draw of Avila forever. In 2007, she was hired as the Assistant Director of the Avila University Upward Bound program, a federally funded project that reaches out to low-income potential first-generation college students in the Kansas City area. She has now decided to complete her master's degree in education at Avila, and plans to graduate in December of 2008, making her a third generation Avila alumnae.

There are countless other ways this family connects with the Sisters of St. Joseph. Dorothy's sister was S. Dorothy Eleanor, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Nancy is a principal at her alma mater, St. Teresa's Academy, which is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph. Michaela was named after S. Michaela Zahner who is a Sister of St. Joseph and currently serves on Avila University's Board of Trustees. Dorothy's daughter (Nancy's sister and Michaela's aunt) Colleen is also an Avila graduate.

In the case of Dorothy Nestor's family, Avila has truly been "all in the family." 🍷



Dorothy Nestor '38, her granddaughter Michaela Hand, and daughter Nancy Hand '71, share an Avila legacy.





# Avila student shares his courageous journey

by Michelle Key

*"I hope to help myself and other lost boys and girls by sharing my experiences."*

— Ayuel Leek Deng —



On Sept. 18, Avila University student Ayuel Leek Deng's book *Courageous Journey: Walking the Lost Boys' Path from the Sudan to America* was released to the public through New Horizons Press.

Leek collaborated with Barbara Youree and Beny Ngor Chad, a fellow Lost Boy, on the narrative non-fiction book. *Courageous Journey* follows the experiences of Leek and Chad during the civil war in Sudan, fleeing their burned villages, being displaced with thousands of other lost boys and girls and their journey to the United States.

"These are my thoughts and feelings and this is my way of airing them out, to get them out of me," Leek said. "The things that I've seen, those memories are killing me from the inside so I need to release them. I hope to help myself and other lost boys and girls by sharing my experiences."

The team has been working on the book since 2002 when Leek met Youree at church. Youree was a mentor for Leek, helping him adjust to American life. After listening to his stories, Youree asked what she could do to help.

"I told her the way to help is to share my story," Leek said. "So Barbara asked if I would help her write a book."

Leek and Chad met as children and, uniquely, were both sent to Kansas City. Through the writing process, Leek and Youree decided to add in the experiences of Chad.

"Beny and I are from different regions, but from the same tribe and speak the same language," Leek said. "We take care of each other. We are a united family, because we're all we have. I consider him like my mother and father because he cared for me."


With the help of Youree and Chad, Leek said he is fulfilling his dreams.

"Writing a book is part of my childhood dream," Leek said. "I want to show other people what the lost boys and girls have gone through. My dream is to be a leader and save innocent people. I dreamed of opportunity and now I have it. Now, I hope for change."

In August, Leek presented a signed copy of the 330-page, hardcover book to Dr. David Wissmann, professor of sociology at Avila University. Leek said that after moving, it was hard to get comfortable within a new culture, and Wissmann encouraged Leek throughout his transition.

Unidentified "Lost Boy" carries his possessions from Sudan.




A large, semi-transparent photograph of a smiling man with short dark hair, wearing a dark shirt with thin vertical stripes. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera.

"He's a wonderful man and a very caring person," Leek said. "He encouraged me, understood my situation and was curious to know about what I've been through."

Today, the two heroes of the story both attend American universities, Leek at Avila University and Chad at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. The partners have started the Lost Boys Face Foundation, a non-profit organization to support other refugees. Their goal is to build training and counseling centers to help lost children gain a better life.

"I believe that God gives us our qualities and I'm truly blessed with my ability to think," Leek said. "It's my dream to help those that are suffering and I know I need to speak up. I need to utilize the gifts that God has given me and not take them for granted."

*The Courageous Journey* is available now at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and will be available in bookstores nationwide. For more information about the Lost Boys Face Foundation, visit [www.lostboysfacefoundation.org](http://www.lostboysfacefoundation.org). 

*Michelle Key is Avila's public relations specialist.*

***We are a united family,  
because we're all we have.***



## It's been a busy year in alumni relations!

On Apr. 11, 2008, 37 guest rooms at the Great Wolf Lodge were filled with alumni and their families. President Ron Slepitz, his wife Suzanne, S. Olive Louise Dallavis, CSJ, and 109 guests celebrated the occasion with an ice cream social. Families enjoyed the water park and the time spent together.

On Friday, Aug. 15, 2008, 122 Avila alumni, faculty, staff and students made their way to Community America Ballpark to watch the Kansas City T-Bones game, and had the bonus experience of being together to watch Michael Phelps on the big screen scoreboard win his seventh Olympic gold medal of the 2008 games. Guests enjoyed a barbecue before the game, door prizes during the game, and a great run around the bases by Dominic the Eagle.

In addition to the large family events hosted this year, smaller receptions have been hosted for classes of the 1940's through the 1950's. These small group settings are a great venue for former students to reconnect, catch up, and get updates about the university from President Slepitz.

Next year's alumni ski trip will be Friday, Feb. 6, and the next Great Wolf Lodge event is set for Friday, Apr. 17. Mark your calendars now for these and other upcoming Alumni events that you'll find listed at [www.avila.edu/alumni/events.asp](http://www.avila.edu/alumni/events.asp). 🦋







## First Friday Freebies! and Thursdays, too!

First Friday Freebies is an on-campus program designed to introduce students to the Alumni Association. On the first Friday of each month, students are invited to the alumni office to receive gifts like t-shirts, hats, calculators, or water bottles that have the Alumni Association logo on them. In this way, we get to know them while they are still students and they get to learn who we are and where the alumni office is located. During the 2007-2008 school year, 1,440 freebies were given away.

The program has proven to be so popular, Thursdays were added to allow even more students an opportunity to visit the alumni office. 📅



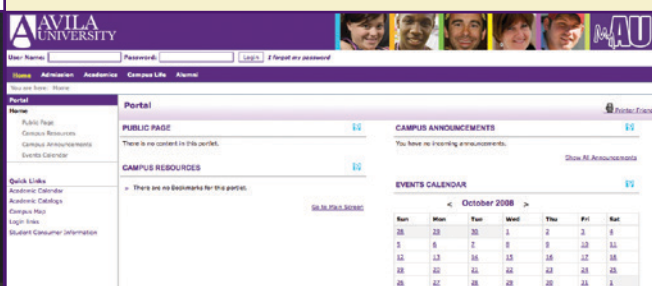
## New online services available

Recently, Avila University officials announced that new services are available online for students and alumni, including online transcript orders and easier access to information.

Avila University official transcripts may now be ordered online with a credit card. Current students can order their transcripts by logging into their Web account at [campusweb.avila.edu/login](http://campusweb.avila.edu/login). Alumni may order their transcripts through [www.avila.edu/registrar/transcript.asp](http://www.avila.edu/registrar/transcript.asp).

Also, new students with a social security number can now print free enrollment verification certificates, view enrollment history, check loan deferments sent to lenders, and view real-time information regarding their student loans. This information can be accessed by logging into their Web account at [campusweb.avila.edu/login](http://campusweb.avila.edu/login).

"A big 'thank you' to the information technology services staff and the registration and student records office staff for all their help making these new services possible for our students and alumni," said David Deitch, information management coordinator. 📅



**Carol Jean DeFeo '68 (math) ..... President**  
**Michele Kerwin '72 (elementary education).. Vice President**  
**John Kopecky, MBA '97 ..... President Elect**  
**Cathy McDaniel '72 (elementary education)..... Secretary**

**Whitney Beiler '08 (theatre)**  
**Judy Budde '77 (elementary education)**  
**Amanda Campos '08 (political science/sociology)**  
**Jamie Cox '03 (communication)**  
**John DeRoo '07 (communication)**  
**Kelly Frey '99 (elementary education)**  
**Connie Haworth, MBA '87**  
**Margaret Mary Henry '01 (history)**  
**Mallee Morris '07 (psychology)**  
**Nancy Mosburg '82 (English)**  
**Keith Richcreek '05 (business administration)**  
**Shawn Wadsworth '08 (biology and chemistry)**

**EAGLE  
DAYS**  
**Avila's  
Homecoming**  
**Oct. 2-4,  
2009**



**'45 Alice (Musholt) Dempsey** is the author of *Their Heritage and Hope*, published by Juniper Winds Press. The book chronicles five generations of the life and times of an Oglala-Lakota Sioux family. Alice graduated with a bachelor of arts.

**'59 Bernadine Abbott Hoduski** was elected to the board for VoterWatch, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower citizens by allowing them to search videos of congress for information about issues of concern to them. She also serves on the board of the Freedom to Read Foundation, an organization which helps guard against library censorship. Bernadine graduated with a bachelor of arts in history.

**'63 Rev. Marshan Fields** was honored as guest speaker for the Lincoln High School/R.T. Coles National Alumni association annual scholarship breakfast in June. Rev. Fields retired from teaching after 37 years of service in the Kansas City School District. Currently, she works as an assistant minister at Ward Chapel A.M.E. Church. Rev. Fields graduated with a degree in education.

**'64 Linda (Moser) Langer** has retired as a children's librarian, which included her work as a freelance writer. She is now busy traveling with her husband Richard who is retired from teaching. She still does two story hours a week at the library for audiences of up to 100. Linda graduated with a bachelor of arts in English.

**'64 Sally (Otto) Merten** and her husband Alan are happy to announce the arrival of their grandson, Wyatt Anthony Belleville, born on Apr. 15, 2008. Wyatt joins big brother Will and parents Melissa and Bill Belleville who live in New

York City. Sally graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'65 Cherie (Watts) Dougherty** transferred to England so she could continue her federal service career. Her husband retired from his mortgage banker position in Phoenix, Ariz. so he could travel with her. They love living in England and the opportunity to travel. They have two granddaughters, ages 19 years and 19 months, and they are expecting their first grandson. They plan to retire in Phoenix after their stay in the UK. Cherie graduated with a bachelor of science in chemistry.

**'66 Sarah (Dove) Reinemeyer** has retired from Texaco (now Chevron). She is starting a tree farm in Colmesneil, Tex. Sarah graduated with a bachelor of arts in mathematics.

**'67 Roxana (Kirk) Howe** is employed as a clinical liaison nurse manager at the TRICARE Service Center at Ft. Riley, Kan. She has been employed by TriWest Healthcare Alliance, which is the company that manages the military healthcare program (TRICARE) in the west region (21 states). She has been with them for over ten years. She finds it a challenging and rewarding job to make sure that current service members, retirees and their families receive the best available health care. In addition, Roxana and her husband own and operate a grain farming operation. They have been married for 37 years, have three married sons, three grandsons and one granddaughter on the way. Roxana graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'67 Brenda (Wood) Isom** taught English in the Kansas City, Kan. School District for 30 years and retired in 1997. She then went to work for the North Kansas City District where she

worked as an elementary school counselor for five years and retired. She is still an adjunct faculty member at Kansas City, Kan. Community College where she also has been teaching since 1983. Her husband has retired from the insurance field and they are enjoying their grandchildren Ayoka, 3, and Desmond, 20 months. Brenda graduated with a bachelor of arts in English.

**'70 Julie (Owen) Schap** spent 23 years in the finance field and is currently a vice president of investments for UBS Financial Services. Four years ago, she returned to Chicago for a high school reunion and sat next to her former English teacher. After reconnecting at the reunion, this year they will celebrate their third wedding anniversary. She is a performing pianist in a duo with Wen Yih Yu, a violinist from Taiwan who is with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra. Julie graduated with a bachelor of arts.

**'72 Pat Logan** received her master of arts in counseling and guidance from the University of Missouri Kansas City. She retired June 1, 2007 from the State of Missouri Department of Mental Health in Jefferson City. She enjoys visits with her grandchildren in Paola, Kan.

**'74 Patty (Priestly Laughlin) Leathers** is "retired but still working." She loves her two days a week as an R.N. in an ambulatory surgery center. She participates in the Scholarship Sponsors Committee at Avila. This Sept., her high school class ('58) from Loretto celebrated their 50th class reunion. Patty graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'76 Denise Caldarello** is a retired teacher and music educator. She resides in Moberly with her husband Cole and their five children. She was



recently appointed to the Moberly Area Community College Board of Trustees. Denise graduated with a bachelor of arts in music.

**'76 Diane (Novak) Gardner, MN, RN, Ed. D.** has been appointed the chair of the University of West Florida Department of Nursing. Diane graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'76 Jeanne (Steffens) Lichty** lives in Spring, Texas. Her daughter Lindsey is a 23-year-old graduate of the University of Texas, and is currently living and working in New York. Her daughter Ali is 22 and a graduate of the University of Texas. Ali will attend graduate school in 2009. Jeanne graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'76 Cheryl (Asel) Thruston** is the director of the Missouri AFL-CIO Dislocated Worker Program. She was appointed by Missouri Governor Matt Blunt to the Missouri Workforce Investment Board. Cheryl graduated with a bachelor of arts in special education.

**'77 Barbara B. (Borgstede) Mason, Ph.D.** has retired. She has six grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. Barbara graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'77 Patrice (Dean) McLaughlin** is now retired and has been married for 28 years. Her son Anthony is 26 and is working on an English degree from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Her son Michael is 21 and completed his first year of medical school at UAMS, Little Rock. Patrice loves to travel, especially on cruises. She is busy volunteering and spending time at the fitness center. Patrice graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'79 Martha Growney-Lawler** has been married to her husband Ray for 31 years. They have four daughters, and on their ten acres of land, they raise Norwegian Fjord horses. Martha graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'81 Jane (Hulsey) Cochran** received a Ph.D. in nursing on Dec. 14, 2007 from the University of Missouri. Her dissertation, "Meta Analysis of Quality of Life Outcomes following Diabetes Self Management Training" was submitted for publication. Jane graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'82 Bob Dehaemers, MA, RN, NE-BC** is currently the vice president of Compliance Career Staff Unlimited in Irving, Texas, a subsidiary of

Sun Health Care Group, Irvine, Calif. Bob works for SUN and has compliance responsibilities for Career Staff, a temporary healthcare staffing and physician locum tenens company with a nationwide presence. Bob resides in Arlington, Texas. He recently completed the requirements for certification as a Nursing Executive with the Commission on Certification of the American Nurses Credentialing Center. Bob has held this credential for over 20 years, and was only the third nurse in Kansas at the time to achieve this credential. Bob holds a master's degree in human resources with an emphasis in health care administration. Bob graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'84 Dr. Sue Courtney** accepted the position of dean of business and technology for the Kansas City, Kan. Community College. She will direct various programs at the KCCC Technical Education Center as well as the business and technology divisions. Dr. Courtney has also been elected secretary of the Board of Directors for the 2008 National Conference for the Associate Board of Commission for the Association for Collegiate Business Schools and Programs. Dr. Courtney graduated with an MBA.

# AVILA UNIVERSITY

## A L U M N I A S S O C I A T I O N

*Staying connected  
to Avila is easy!*

Submit your news for publication in *Accent*. Let us know when you get a new job or promotion, get engaged or married, have babies, retire or take a fabulous vacation. You also can send photos! Return this form or update your information online at [www.avila.edu/alumni/update.asp](http://www.avila.edu/alumni/update.asp)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Maiden: \_\_\_\_\_ Class Year: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ News: \_\_\_\_\_



**'86 Stuart Lindeman** and his wife Ann just moved to Guilford, Conn., where he is the president of Revera Healthcare US, a skilled rehab company with locations in ten states. Stuart graduated with a bachelor of arts in public administration.

**'87 Tim Barchak** has taken a position with the Delaware State Education Association after a number of years of working in politics in Missouri. Tim now lives with his wife, Jennifer, his daughter Keely and son Jake in quaint Newark, Del. Tim graduated with a bachelor of arts in history and English.

**'87 Peggy (Pfeifer) Eldredge** was one of ten winners selected from hundreds of Nursing: The Heart of Healthcare nominees. She started the Breast Education and Support Program at Trinity and the Breast Navigator program at North Kansas City Hospital where she serves as an oncology clinical nurse specialist. Peggy graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'88 Debbie (Warburton) Aimen** owns her own business called "A Sweet Expression" located in Kansas City's River Market. She was recently elected to the Hickman Mills C-1 School Board. Debbie graduated with a bachelor of science in elementary education.

**'88, '02 Vita (Girardi) Osborn** has taught high school English in the Blue Springs School District for over 13 years. She has three children, one of whom graduated from high school in 2007, and another who graduated in 2008. Vita graduated with a bachelor of science in English and a minor in secondary education as well as her master of arts in education.

**'88 Deborah (Amos) Welhoff** is an application analyst consultant with DST Systems, Inc. She was recently

elected to the Harrisonville R-IX school board. Deb graduated with a bachelor of arts in communication.

**'90 Edwinna (Windy) Garrett** earned a master of science degree in nursing from the University of Phoenix in July 2008. Garrett graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'92 Jennifer (James) Speiss** has welcomed three new children into her family via adoption. Daughter Madison, 10, joined the family on Oct. 2, 2006; twins Mickey and Mikey, 2, joined sister Madison on Feb. 4, 2008. Jennifer graduated with a bachelor of arts in natural science.

**'94 Shirley (Yinn) Winn** and her husband, Wilson James, celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary on Dec. 14, 2007. She works as a housing administrator for the City Planning and Development Department in Kansas City, Mo. Shirley graduated with a master of business administration.

**'97 Adina Solomon-Stein** was awarded her doctorate (Ed.D.) in teacher leadership in Oct. of 2007. Adina graduated with a bachelor of arts in general studies.

**'98 Shane Sands** earned his master's degree in education with an emphasis in online teaching and learning in June 2008. Shane graduated with a bachelor of arts in psychology.

**'99 Fran (Betzen) Cook, LSCSW,** was honored as "social worker of the year" by Wichita State University at the Pride of Wichita Empowerment Rally. She is currently the staff supervisor at Catholic Charities Harbor House. Fran graduated with a bachelor of social work.

**'99 Stacie (Estep) Hemmerling** is the vice president and cash management officer at Hawthorn

Bank. She is active with the Lee's Summit Chamber of Commerce and is a coordinator for Leadership Lee's Summit. She graduated with a bachelor of science in business administration with a concentration in finance.

**'99 Amber (Painter) Keith** has worked as an R.N. at North Kansas City Hospital for the last seven years. For the last two years, she's been doing inpatient wound care. She was named Employee of the Year for 2007. Amber graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.



**'00 Rossana (Vallazza) Kistler** has been married to Lawrence Kistler since 2003. Daughter MariaCeleste was born in Yokosuka, Japan in 2005. Son Lance was born in Alexandria, Va. in 2007. While living in Japan, Rossana was able to catch up with former Avila ESL student Yuko Yagi. Rosanna graduated with a bachelor of arts in communication.

**'00 Bob Turner** took the position of field claims manager with Farmers Insurance over the property division of the state of Michigan in Feb. 2007. He has relocated to Michigan with wife Melissa Vasko '02 and daughters Logan, 4, and Maison, 2.





**'01 Laurel Sparks-Prichard** and her husband Matt welcomed daughter Lyla Belle in Aug. of 2007. Laurel graduated from the UMKC School of Dentistry this past May with her Doctor of Dental Surgery degree. She has taken a job with Jordan Valley Community Health Center in Springfield, Mo. Laurel graduated with a bachelor of science in pre-medicine.

**'01 Steffanie (Linter) Solberg** joined the United States Air Force. She is currently stationed with her family at Langley Air Force Base in Va. where she is the infection control officer for the medical group, which includes the hospital and clinics. Steffanie graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'01 Laurie (Purk) Tobler and Brian Tobler '01** have two children, Brock, 8 months, and Paige, 2. Laurie is a stay-at-home mom and Brian works as a district director for the Boy Scouts. Laurie graduated with a bachelor of science in elementary education. Brian graduated with a bachelor of science in math and computer science.



**'01 Melissa (Gregory) Vento** is the proud mother of Elena Nicholle, born Feb. 25, 2008. Elena joins big brother Evan Gregory, 4. Melissa has worked for Truman Medical Center—Hospital Hill since graduation. She is currently the designated weekend night charge nurse in labor and delivery. Melissa and her husband Kevin celebrated their 13th wedding anniversary on Apr. 26, 2008. Melissa graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'02 Liz Donnelly** began a doctoral program at Holos University Graduate Seminary in Sept. 2007. Holos University affirms the highest holistic and ecumenical spiritual principals as the foundation for optimal physical, mental, and spiritual health. She is working towards becoming a doctor of theology with an emphasis in spiritual direction. She is still working full time and hopes to complete her degree in four years. Liz graduated with a bachelor of arts in psychology.

**'02 Dianna Irvine-Mayes** graduated in May from MidAmerican Nazarene University with her master of arts in education with a concentration in special education. She has worked with at-risk and special education students for the past two years. She is a member of Pi Lambda Theta. Dianna graduated

with a bachelor of science in middle school education.

**'02 BryAnn Middleton** joined the Drexel High School staff in Drexel, Mo., as the social studies teacher. She graduated with a social studies degree. She will also coach junior high basketball and girls track. She hopes to help educate teenagers during the most important years of their lives.

**'02 Jennifer (Raines) Remy** has been working at KU Medical Center in the emergency department. During her time at KUMC, she has achieved many certifications including TNCC, ACLS, PALS and CEN. She is serving on the Department of Nursing Practice Council and PRIDE committee as well as the emergency department's hazmat committee. Jennifer graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'03 Tim Greenwell** is living and teaching in Dallas, Texas. Tim graduated with a master of arts in education.

**'03 Amye Ladd** joined the Missouri State Highway patrol as an officer in July. She recently graduated from the 87th recruit class of the patrol and will serve Carter and Reynolds counties in Mo. She graduated from Avila with a degree in finance.

**'04 Ashley Fox** married **Michael Socin '05** in Nov. of 2006. She graduated with a bachelor of science in social work.

**'04, '07 John Mulnix** married **Heidi Heric '08** on July 14, 2007, in Seattle, Wash. The couple met at Avila, and Heidi graduated with a degree in nursing from Avila. John received his bachelor of science in business administration and his master in business administration.

**'05 Misty (DeMoss) Burch** accepted a Project Associate



position with PRA International, a pharmaceutical research company located in Lenexa, Kan. Misty graduated with a bachelor of arts in psychology.

'06 **Nathan Cane** is currently working for Kidwell in Lincoln, Neb., as a systems administrator. Nathan graduated with a bachelor of science in computer science.

'06 **Louis Alvarado** is a graduate student in anthropology at the University of New Mexico. He was just awarded a National Science Foundation grant which will give him an annual stipend over three years, full tuition and a travel expense account. Out of 913 awards given, only eight anthropology students nationwide received

a grant. Louis graduated with a bachelor of arts in sociology.

'07 **David Harris** is teaching "Successful Small Business Planning" on UMKC's campus. The class is designed for entrepreneurs and small business owners and is based on David's 18 years in corporate America, entrepreneurship, and academia. David graduated with a master of science in organizational development.

'07 **Tabitha (Minshall) Harris** began graduate school for her master in counseling and art therapy in 2007. Tabitha graduated with a bachelor of arts in art.

'07 **Crystal (Hosley) Smart** welcomed new daughter Cynthia

on Sept. 30, 2007. Crystal graduated with a bachelor of science in elementary education.

'07 **Richard Zarate**, in conjunction with the Hispanic Economic Development Corporation, opened an office at Donnelly College in Kansas City, Kan. Their goal is to assist entrepreneurs within the Hispanic community in starting their own businesses. As the director of business and economic growth for the HEDC, he will staff the office. He graduated with a master degree in organizational development.



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**'35 Jane (Dugan) Mayer** passed away on April 1, 2008

**'45 Patricia (Sage) Trotter** passed away in March of 2008.

**'46 Kathleen (Froeschl) Baska** passed away on April 19, 2008. Kathleen graduated with a bachelor of arts in English.

**'47 Helen (Heidenreich) Campbell** passed away in March 2008.

**'50 Marilyn Morris Kane** passed away on November 17, 2007. Marilyn graduated with a bachelor of arts in art.

**'52 Dorothy (Plassmeyer) Leck** passed away in December of 2007. Dorothy graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'54 S. Rosarita Allen** passed away June 17. S. Rosarita spent 67 years as a CSJ, with teaching as her primary occupation. She enjoyed preparing children for their First Communion and teaching the Lord's Prayer. S. Rosarita graduated with a bachelor degree in English.

**'54 Dorothy Virginia (Hackett) Mathews** passed away on December 27, 2007. Dorothy graduated with a bachelor of science in education.

**'59 Pauline B. (Bumgardner) Green** passed away on February 29, 2008. Pauline graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing.

**'61 Virginia Pell** passed away May 26. She was a dedicated teacher, volunteer and mother of three.

**'63 Catherine Ann (McMahon) Kinnard** passed away on December 21, 2007. Cathy worked in both the theatre and registrar's office on the Avila campus.

**'64 Cecelia Stimac** passed away August 1. After receiving a degree in history from Avila, she taught school for many years and also worked for the Orthopedic Professional Association.

**'69 Cathleen Connealy** passed away on December 29, 2007. Cathleen graduated with a bachelor of arts in sociology.

**'70 Mary Carey Lynch** passed away May 8, 2008. Mary graduated with a bachelor of arts in education.

**'74 Carol Jo (Angold) Andreasen** passed away on November 25, 2007. Carol Jo graduated with a bachelor of arts in art.

**'77 Louise G. (Chandler) Mangrum** passed away on December 19, 2007. Louise graduated with a bachelor of arts.

**'77 Theresa Beauchamp** passed away on February 13, 2008. Theresa graduated with a bachelor of arts in art.

**'87 Joyce E. (Harris) Bonar** passed away on March 14, 2008. Joyce graduated with a bachelor of science in social work.

**'97 Cesario Juarez, Jr.,** passed away July 8, 2008. He was a Vietnam veteran with a bronze service star, a teacher and an active member of his community in St. Joseph. He graduated with a degree in political science.

**'08 Brandon C. Fautleroy-McDowell** passed away on March 25, 2008 in Kansas City, Mo. Brandon was only eight weeks away from receiving his MBA from Avila when he was murdered in a random car jacking incident. Brandon received his undergraduate degree from the University of Missouri, Kansas City and planned to attend law school there in the fall of 2008. Brandon's family received his degree posthumously at graduation exercises on May 10, 2008. Avila has established a scholarship fund in his memory and is accepting donations in the advancement office.

**'08 Emilie Brumit** passed away July 18, 2008. Ms. Brumit graduated with a degree in political science, and had won several awards in her participation in a mock trial. She was an avid hunter and cave diver, enjoyed sports and loved fashion, music and movies.

**Evelyn Nigro** passed away July 21, 2008. She spent much of her time volunteering in many organizations focused on improving our community, including Avila University, Notre Dame Auxiliary and Rockhurst University.

*in memoriam*



# Help support Eagles athletics!

## Corporate Sponsorship

The Avila athletics corporation sponsorship program has been around since the inception of Avila's athletic programs, which began in 1974. The athletic department and athletic facilities have grown dramatically since then, as has the athletics corporate sponsors. The athletics department is grateful to all of the corporate sponsors and would like to thank them by encouraging alumni to patronize their businesses. For a complete list of corporate sponsors, visit [www.avila.edu/athletics/sponsors.asp](http://www.avila.edu/athletics/sponsors.asp).

If you or your business are interested in learning more about the corporate sponsorship opportunities with Avila Athletics, call 816-501-3634. 🦅

## Eagles Athletics Association

This external giving opportunity has been a part of Eagle athletics since they began in 1974. The program has gone through some minor changes through the years, but the focus has always been to help with special department needs.

The EAA, which is run through and controlled by the Director of Athletics, has been structured to offer several different levels of giving opportunities so that the donor feels comfortable in the level they choose. It is important to understand that the giving level chosen allows for the opportunity to give 50% of the level amount to a designated athletic program. These funds will enhance the collegiate experience of Avila student-athletes in their specific programs as well as department-wide financial support.

Donors can choose a variety of ways to show their support, including direct contribution, matching gifts, gifts of securities, and life income gifts.

For more information regarding the Eagle Athletics Association, call the athletic department at 816-501-3634. 🦅



## Catch Your Eagles Online!

Check out all the action both on and off the field at [www.avila.edu/athletics!](http://www.avila.edu/athletics!) This is the place to go for scoreboard info, rosters, Eagles gear, and more!





# 2008 Athletic Hall of Fame induction

**S**cott Royal-Ferris became the latest inductee into the Avila Athletic Hall of Fame on Sunday, September 7, 2008 at halftime of the men's soccer match versus Briar Cliff University.

It is only fitting the induction take place on the Zarda Athletic Complex and at halftime of a soccer game as Royal-Ferris was the third soccer coach in Avila history starting in 1983 and was the force behind the development of the current Zarda Complex.

Royal-Ferris had a stellar career as the full-time soccer coach at Avila as well as becoming the first full-time director of athletics at the school in 1989. He oversaw the start of baseball and softball, brought the department their first athletic trainer and training room, and was instrumental in creating the Athletic Hall of Fame, of which he is now a member.

To see a list of all Hall of Fame members, go to [www.avila.edu/athletics/hof.asp](http://www.avila.edu/athletics/hof.asp)



President Ron Slepitza and Interim Athletic Director Anthony Hall present Scott Royal-Ferris with a Hall of Fame plaque while his family watches proudly.



## Honoring academic excellence

Since he began as professor of education and psychology at Avila University in 1977,

**Dr. Fred Geer** has always found time to support Eagle athletics. His contributions as a coach, mentor to student-athletes, and faculty athletic representative have been vital to the growth of the Avila University athletic department.

In the fall of 2002, because of this commitment and dedication, the athletics department established an annual academic award in Dr. Geer's honor. The Geer Cup is awarded annually to the male and female varsity team that has the highest annual cumulative grade point average from the previous academic year, as well as honoring and recognizing the individual male and female athletes who attained the highest

annual cumulative GPA.

The Cups are presented each fall during the Eagle Madness pep rally held during Homecoming weekend and has become a student favorite for academic bragging rights for the teams. The Cups are proudly displayed in the lobby area of the athletics department listing the team and individual winners from each year since 2002.

Throughout his time at Avila, Dr. Geer has been an ardent fan of Eagle athletics and advocate of Avila student-athletes. A fixture at Eagle athletic events, Dr. Geer has committed his life to mentoring, educating, and befriending the student-athletes of Avila University. With his contributions, Eagle athletics and Eagle student-athletes have flourished.





# Coming Events



This unique exhibit incorporates photos, video footage, documents and artifacts to celebrate the pope's extraordinary contributions to relations between the Catholic and Jewish faiths. Guests will take a historic walk through the life of this beloved pope.

**February 3-March 27, 2009**  
**at Union Station Kansas City**

For more information or to volunteer go to:  
[www.avila.edu/blessing](http://www.avila.edu/blessing)

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*33rd*  
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**March 7, 2009**

*Blessings Bloom*

33rd Annual Avila University Steer Dinner & Auction  
Sheldon Overland Park Hotel • March 7, 2009





## Avila Heritage

**"Because we value Avila University and its mission of providing young people with an education which combines faith and learning, we decided to take an active role in preserving that mission by including Avila in our estate plans. We felt it was important to help others who are pursuing a degree in business. Establishing an endowed scholarship fund was the right thing for us to do."**

*Don, former trustee of Avila University, community leader and international business entrepreneur, and his wife Christine have been long time benefactors of Avila. As co-chair of Avila's most recent capital campaign, Don was most insightful and engaging. He helped Avila grow stronger in applying its values.*

## Building the Future

### Don & Christine Alexander

### Securing Avila's Heritage

The will (or living trust) is one of the most popular vehicles for making a gift to Avila. You have the freedom to identify the size of the gift, as well as how you would like it to be used to benefit future generations of Eagles. To find out more about the advantages of including Avila in your will, or if you already have named Avila as a beneficiary of your estate, please contact Jessie Fuller, senior director of advancement, at 816.501.3613.

#### Consider these advantages:

- Easy to create
- Maintain access to your assets
- Membership in the Heritage Society
- Still provide for your loved ones
- Avoid estate tax
- Create a lasting legacy at Avila
- Provide an opportunity for future generations of students



## Alumni Trip to Rome! November 6–14, 2009

**E**xplore two great cities that epitomize Italy's culture, architecture and rich historical heritage - Rome and Florence. Rome's timeless monuments include the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, and the Trevi Fountain. Marvel at St. Peter's Basilica; the largest church in the world, and visit legendary Pompeii. Florence, the beautiful city known as "the Cradle of the Renaissance," has architectural treasures around virtually every corner. Famous landmarks include the Duomo and the Ponte Vecchio Bridge. Discover the scenic Tuscan countryside as you travel to medieval Lucca and the classic Italian city of Pisa.



***For more detailed information regarding the trip, visit [www.avila.edu/alumnitravel](http://www.avila.edu/alumnitravel) or e-mail [advancement@avila.edu](mailto:advancement@avila.edu).***

